



reunion



Jars are to share

by **Leona Oesch**

previous Menno-Hof hostess

Glass canning jars, fruits, vegetables and meats were part of my growing-up years. We planted a garden each spring. We hoed and pulled weeds all summer. We gleaned when things ripened, and we filled glass canning jars, hundreds of them. We raised chickens, pigs, and beef on our farm and we butchered, prepared the meat and canned it in jars.

Guests joined us every Sunday for the noon meal. We would enjoy together what Mama and we girls had canned. When my Papa preached on Sunday, he often quoted verses about hospitality. I remember packing dozens of jars filled with fruit or vegetables or meat in the fall for each of my three bachelor uncles.

Mama was a wonderfully hardworking woman who had grown up helping prepare food for a large group of siblings, nephews and nieces who eked out a living as immigrant Mennonite pioneers in White Sulphur Springs, Montana, in the early 1900s. Hard times and a hungry family had taught her that efficiency, thriftiness and laughter kept the family going. Canning was a necessity. It was doing God's work.

Though retired, canning
cont. on page 3

Ten questions about a lifestyle that fascinates many

by Loren Beachy, Goshen, Indiana

Please understand, in my responding to all these questions, my aim is to educate, not condemn. The entire goal of our Amish lifestyle is to make it easier for us and our descendants to follow Jesus Christ. We believe this culture is the best one for us. We do not claim it is the only way to attain Heaven, Jesus Christ is the only way.

1 Do the Amish pay taxes?

There are only two things certain in life... Yes. We Amish pay taxes as much as the next person. The myth of us not paying taxes is a bit grievous since we believe in following the New Testament teachings on submitting to the government whenever it doesn't violate Biblical principles. Jesus said, "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's." (Matthew 22:21) I imagine that also meant Uncle Sam.

With all that said, there are small groups of Amish who choose to be ultra-conservative. Supposedly, they live off the beaten path somewhere, shun Social Security numbers, deal only in cash and, as far as the government is concerned, may not even exist. I cannot speak for these groups since I have so little information. They are in the distinct minority.

2 Do the Amish use banks and credit cards?

Yes. Throughout the country, as we'll discuss later, there is a great degree of variation in how conservative groups of Amish choose to be. Some of the more conservative may not use debit cards, but to the best of my knowledge, almost all of the Amish use banks. In the area where I live, debit cards are fairly prevalent.

3 Do the Amish vote? As a rule, no. We believe we can help our government more by praying for them than by casting one vote. And we do want to pray for our leaders (I Timothy 2:12). Separation of church and state is an important part of the church's history and we desire to be citizens of an eternal kingdom much more than an earthly one. Thus, the practice of keeping participation in government at an arm's length. With this said, there are groups of Amish that choose to vote in local elections, but none in the area where I live.

4 What determines whether the men do or do not wear beards? In our community, a man will grow a beard after

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“We really enjoyed our visit. Learned a lot of how their religion fit into history and saw many things we did not expect. Go, you will not be sorry - wished we had more time.”

—recent online review

Ten questions... (cont. from front)

he is married. It saves money on razors that he now needs to support a wife. All jokes aside, originally, an Amish young man would grow a beard as soon as he joined the church, regardless of marital status. This is part of our non-conformed culture, much like plain clothes. Through some drift perhaps, it is now common in many areas to wait until one is married to grow facial hair. In some communities, though, men do begin sooner.

5 What is the role of a bishop and how is he chosen? I asked Grandpa Miller, a retired bishop, about this one. He responded, “A bishop shall be a shepherd to his flock and lead them in preaching the plan of salvation, in baptisms, weddings and funerals. They are ordained by lot, chosen by God, as in Acts 1:23-26.” In my young life, I have lived in churches under three different bishops and have yet to experience a harsh one. People are people and styles and interpretations will vary, but I think it is safe to say there are many more George Washingtons than Fidel Castros. It should also be noted that although a bishop is ordained to lead the church, there are no decisions on church policy made without the unanimous vote of the members.

6 Why are there so many sects of the Amish and differences in which rules they will follow? This is an excellent question and may best be answered with “because we’re human.” I think all Amish would agree that we need a line, the clearer the better, in order to keep us non-conformed to the world. Where exactly to draw the line though? That is where many differences of opinion come into play. The ideal situation might be that all we Amish would agree on all issues and we would have uniform standards across the world. Doesn’t happen. It probably never will on this side of the grave. In the meantime, by the grace of God, we’ll strive to understand, respect and love all people as Jesus taught.

7 Why can the Amish have phones for business or in an outbuilding, but not in their homes? I politely object to the word “can” in that question. We choose not to have phones in our homes or in our pocket because we fear it would disrupt our family life and lead us away from values we hold dear. We

realize we need to make some concessions in order to function in the world and it has seemed to work well to have a phone slightly separated from the home. The growing use of cell phones by some Amish is a concern to many and is an issue being sorted through at the present. Degrees of conservatism vary.

8 Why do Amish children drop out of school after the eighth grade? We Amish aim to provide an education that enables a person to earn a living. We believe that an eighth grade education is sufficient to do this. So far, through all the years, this belief has proven true. It is felt that higher education tends to lead away from our simple non-conformed lifestyle. Therefore, we avoid it.

9 Why do the Amish not have their photos taken? I asked Grandpa Miller for help here. “We have discouraged photos using one of the Ten Commandments, “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything in heaven above or the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.” (Exodus 20:4-5) Use of all photos is not strictly shunned in our community, but photos of people are not for display.

10 What is rumspringa? Interpreted literally it means “running around.” What it really means and how Hollywood and the media have at times portrayed it are two different things. Shocking, isn’t it? Chuckle. Rumspringa is the period of time when a youth “runs around” with other youth to social functions, hymn singings, recreational sports, etc. In the process, he often meets a partner, courts her and gets married, abruptly ending the “running around.” It is not intended to be a time of partying or other wild excesses. Most of the time, for about 85 percent of the youth, it isn’t. Amish teenagers, though, are much like any teenagers. Sometimes they suddenly think they know much more than their parents and go against their parents’ wishes in things they choose to do or have. Some parents permit this; very few encourage it. It should be emphasized, though, that while these youth may get the headlines, they are distinctly in the minority.

Loren Beachy lives in Goshen, Ind., and is a member of the Old Order Amish Church. He is an auctioneer, elementary school teacher and author of the book *Chasing the Amish Dream*.

by the numbers

225 people braved the chilly wind and attended the 7th annual Singspiraton on September 13.

\$970 was given for Menno-Hof during the Singspiraton offering. Thank you!

32 different religious affiliations have been represented by our visitors so far in 2015.

950,927 visitors to-date (since Menno-Hof opened in 1988.)

An invitation to give...

Below are just some of the many positive comments we have received recently from our visitors. We are thankful that Menno-Hof is sought out by so many individuals (around 18,000+ a year!) and that we have the privilege of having their attention for over an hour as they listen and learn.

At least 35% of our budget needs to come from donations. The staff and board are diligent in being good stewards with what God has given. We invite you to consider Menno-Hof in your year-end giving. If you have already given—thank you! Your gift makes a difference.

“One of the best museums I have ever visited!”

“A wonderful reflection and example of how to follow in the footsteps of Christ.”

“This is the best thing we have spent money on in a long time!”

“This is more than something to see - it’s an experience.”

“Very informative. Loved the focus on Christ.”

Contributions are tax-deductible and can be sent to: Menno-Hof, PO Box 701, Shippshewana, Ind., 46565



Welcome!

Steve Miller, Goshen, Ind., has agreed to serve on the Menno-Hof Board of Directors as an Amish-Mennonite representative beginning January 2016. Board members took action at their October 2015 meeting to affirm Steve

to this position.

Steve currently serves as lead pastor at Woodlawn Amish Mennonite Church, Goshen, in addition to being a self-employed plumber. Steve and his wife, Deborah, have five children: Vincent, Candace, Connie, Erica, and Regan. In his spare time he enjoys traveling and Rand McNally road atlases.

“I support the vision of Menno-Hof and am glad to serve in this way.”

Jars are to share (cont. from front)

still gives me a sense of nurturing God’s creation, as well as a vehicle for hospitality. I enjoy the first blossoms on the peach tree because I can already see the beauty of the red-cheeked, golden fruit in rows of filled jars, jars that I can open when grandkids come for supper. They love home-canned peaches.

A Christmas basket with jars of homemade raspberry jam, pickled beets, cocktail pickles and peaches has God wrapped up inside each jar.



God makes the seeds, sends the water, creates the soil, and tells the sun to shine. I just help preserve what He gives by putting it in jars.

Jars are to share. Jars bring smiles. Jars offer love. My young grandson from Wyoming brought dozens of jars he bought for me last summer at yard sales. Smiling he said, “I knew you’d love them, Grandma.” His Christmas box will be jars filled with raspberry jam.

Now I haven’t told you about the times my canning jobs didn’t turn out so well. These events make me crabby, and I feel betrayed by the produce I worked so hard to preserve. But then—maybe laughter and surprise are a better response to a canning project gone awry. I think God chuckles while waiting for me to laugh and try again. Canning has seemed an integral part of following the Jesus Way as I relate to people in my world.

“My husband and I thought we knew a lot about their culture but there was much more to be told. The museum is visitor friendly and a good study in the diverse cultures here in America.”

—recent online review

BLESS YOU!

Beginnings & endings

host & hostess

Glen & Rachel Wadel

Chambersburg, Pa. | Jan. - Mar.

Are you looking for a way to serve while sharing your faith?

Menno-Hof needs individuals and couples in agreement with Anabaptist values and beliefs to serve as host and/or hostess during March, April, June, July and/or August 2016. A minimum of 30 days is preferred. Responsibilities include conducting tours and some light housekeeping. Two furnished apartments are available on-site.

► **For more information** contact Susan Miller, managing director 260-768-4117 or smiller@mennohof.org

Leona Oesch, a retired teacher, lives in Idaho with her husband, Duane, a retired pastor. They attend Evergreen Heights Mennonite Church. Life highlights for Leona include teaching children, spending time with family and friends and volunteering at Menno-Hof.

From the Timbrel Magazine, Winter 2015. Used by permission.

DIRECTOR'S DESK



Jerry Beasley
executive director

Here we are approaching the end of fall and we feel a chill in the air signaling winter around the corner. Each year at this time we invite folks to consider supporting Menno-Hof with a financial gift. I do admit asking for financial support is not the thing I like most about my role as executive director. However, I do feel Menno-Hof is one of the most effective witness opportunities we as Anabaptist faith communities have initiated together. Because I know firsthand how powerfully it impacts individuals, I also contribute and feel good

encouraging others to do so. I continue to be thankful for the board of directors and their willingness to work together to ensure the story is presented, our focus is maintained, and good stewardship is practiced in the operation. This year we are currently on track to have presented the story to approximately 18,000+ visitors.

You may be aware that the Elkhart/LaGrange area, including Menno-Hof, were identified in a recent newspaper article "Top 8 Spiritual Sites in America" by a national reporter. This was not something we applied for or expected but it resulted from the reporter's own experience during her visit to the area.

As I am completing this article (continued below)



MENNO-HOF

AMISH-MENNONITE VISITORS' CENTER

P.O. Box 701

Shipshewana, Indiana 46565

*See and Hear
the Amish-Mennonite Story*

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Reunion is published quarterly to keep our friends informed of happenings at Menno-Hof. Send questions or comments to director at info@mennohof.org

**Menno-Hof Amish-Mennonite
Visitors' Center**

PO Box 701

510 S Van Buren St, SR 5

Shipshewana, IN 46565

Tele: (260) 768-4117

Fax: (260) 768-4118

E-mail: info@mennohof.org

Web site: www.mennohof.org

Hours:

Monday—Saturday: 10 a.m.—5 p.m.

Summer hours (June, July, August)

Monday—Friday: 10 a.m.—7 p.m.

Saturday: 10 a.m.—5 p.m.

Menno-Hof staff:

Jerry Beasley, executive director
Susan Miller, managing director
Charlotte Long, program and communication associate
Don Miller, facility and grounds associate

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Fern Yoder, Millersburg, Ind.

Director's Desk (cont. from above)

I feel led to share with you that Susan Miller, managing director, is away at her mother's funeral. Please keep Susan and her family in your prayers. Although her mother enjoyed a long life (94 years) her health had been deteriorating in recent years. She was a member of the Old Order Amish Church and looked forward to meeting Jesus, her Savior.

Thank you so much for any way you have supported Menno-Hof. Your prayers, gifts, volunteering and encouragement are appreciated by all of us as we continue to pray that God's will be done on earth as it is in Heaven!